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ABSTRACT

The document presents a unit on Africa and Ghana for seventh grade language arts and eighth grade remedial English classes. It is one of a number of interdisciplinary products developed by a summer workshop for teachers on African curriculum development. The objectives are to help rid students of stereotypes and to make them aware of the diversity of culture on the continent of Africa. An introduction states five educational objectives and six skills relating to African history and geography, literature, music, art, and food. The document presents seven lessons on topics relating to Africa and Ghana such as student perceptions, Akan names, religion, folktales, poetry, music and dance, tie dying, Ashanti gold work, games, and food crops. Each lesson states concept and skills objectives, suggests teacher implementation strategies and student activities, and notes time allotment and needed materials. Learning activities include reading, discussing, story telling, dramatizing, film and slide viewing, playing instruments, researching, playing games, and preparing food. Bibliographies list references for the teacher and for the student and audiovisual materials used in the unit (films, filmstrips, videotapes, cassette tapes, slide sets, and handouts). (CK)

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"A CURRICULUM UNIT ON AFRICA FOR THE SEVENTH GRADE"

An Instructional Unit for Seventh Grade Language Arts
and Eighth Grade Remedial English

by

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Springfield, Illinois

This teaching unit on Africa was developed as part of an interdisciplinary workshop project in African curriculum development held on the University of Illinois' Urbana-Champaign campus in the summer of 1979. The workshop project, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, was carried out from 1977-80 and was integrated into an on-going program of outreach services offered to teachers nationwide. For further information on teaching aids available through outreach services, contact:

Outreach Director
African Studies Program
1208 West California,#101
Urbana, Illinois 61801

SP 012 694

AFRICA'S PLEA

I am not you--
but you will not
give me a chance,
will not let me be me.

"If I were you"--
but you know
I am not you,
yet you will not
let me be me.

You meddle, interfere
in my affairs
as if they were yours
and you were me.

You are unfair, unwise,
foolish to think
that I can be you,
talk, act
and think like you.

God made me me.
He made you you.
For God's sake
Let me be me.

Roland Tombekai Dempster / Liberia

INTRODUCTION

This curriculum unit was designed to help rid the students of stereotypes to make them aware of the diversity of culture on the continent of Africa. These lesson plans will be used in the language arts classroom of a seventh grade as well as with two eighth grade remedial English classes in a middle school.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will identify and examine his perceptions of Africa on a pre-test at the beginning of the unit as well as on a post-test at the conclusion.

2. To provide students with a thorough understanding of Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

3. To study African art, music, and dance in order that students may become aware as well as appreciative of their cultural achievements.

4. To read several kinds of literature including animal tales, proverbs, poetry, drama, myths and epics.

5. By studying another culture students will better understand their own culture and their feelings and attitudes toward it.

SKILLS:

1. The student will study the history and geography of Africa as a continent and Ghana as a nation. The student will be responsible for accumulating data from various sources such as the city library, the school library, or classroom material on the country of Ghana. These will be compiled in a notebook or folder. By frequent review of the information, the student will become aware of changes in his opinion of Africa.

2. The student will study the history of Ghana as presented by oral tradition.

3. Musical instruments and basic rhythms will be demonstrated to help the student become aware of the influence of music in the daily lives of Ghanaians.

4. The student will be taught to tie-die and/or adinkra cloth and will make a usable article.

5. The student will learn several games including Oware.

6. The student will become aware of the food crops which are available or grown in Ghana. After some comparison of recipes, a simple meal will be prepared in the classroom using these foods.

Lesson I

Date _____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES - The student will identify and examine his perceptions of Africa and Ghana.

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. Africa is the second largest continent.
2. Approximately 55 countries are on the continent.
3. To understand that Africa has a variety of land, vegetations, climate and people.

Basic skills

1.
2.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Contemporary African music will be playing on the record player as the children enter the room.

2. Without much introduction, the word association test will be given orally. The papers will be collected before they are discussed. After the unit is completed, the same tests will be administered again.

   Give each word to the class and ask them to write the first word that comes into their mind and not try to find a "right" answer or one they think will satisfy the teacher. The words are:

   Africa, communication, game, animal, weather, color, land, house, country, people, transportation, work, recreation, clothing, resources, leaders.

3. The class will be advised that a unit on Africa with an emphasis on Ghana will occupy the next several weeks. Each student will keep a folder of all exercises and activities in which he/she engages during this alloted period.

4. Show slides of "Urban Africa" (19 slides), available free of charge from the African Studies Program, University of Illinois, 1208 West California, Urbana, IL 61801.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Write a paragraph about what it would be like to be a 13 year-old in one of the towns shown in the slides. Put the story in the folder.

SECOND DAY

Implementation:

1. Have a discussion:
   a. What is a "native?" Are you a native? If so, of what? why do we call people natives? Exactly what do we mean by it? Is it a kind of unkind term? Why?

   b. Do you know anyone who lives in Africa? e.g. Pygmies, Bushmen, Watusi, Ashanti, Zulu, Hausa.
   What are these _____really like?

   c. How do you describe a jungle? Is it the same as a forest? Would you expect to see a jungle in Africa? How much of the continent is jungle? What is a tropical rain forest?

   d. Using the overhead projector, show transparencies with overlays which show the generalized rainfall and vegetation zones as well as the areas which raise crops/cattle. See if the students can conclude that rainfall determines the types of agriculture which can be used in these areas.

2. Using a transparency of Africa show the location of Ghana on the continent.

3. Give a brief summary of ancient Ghana. The western Sudan consists of grasslands or savannas on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. As early as 400 B.C. (2,500 years ago) North Africans traveled across the desert to exchange salt and cloth for Sudanese gold and ivory. By the 7th century trade really flourished. After the Moslem conquest of North Africa in the 7th century Berber and Arab traders spread Islam as well as engaged in commerce.

   Trading cities were established which expanded into empires. The first of these was Ghana which was in existence by 400 A.D.

   By 1067 Ghana had developed iron work to the point where it could make spears and farming tools. Ghana had excellent organization. There was a king who had subordinate kings or governors who ruled thoughout the empire. They paid money to the king for which they received protection and the right to rule their local areas. There was a system of taxation. The king received duty from everything that entered or left his empire.

   Ghana had strong and wise leadership. The king made all of the important decisions himself. He held court and judged cases. At the same time he was diplomatic. He allowed Moslem traders who settled near the town in which the king lived to practice the Islamic religion while the king of Ghana and most of his people followed their own traditional African religion. The Ghana empire eventually fell to other West African people and became incorporated into the Mali empire. Let us see, then, how we happen to have a country named "Ghana" in West Africa today.

   By the end of the 1800s France and Great Britain occupied most of West Africa as colonizing powers. One of Great Britain's colonies was called the Gold Coast, so-named because gold has been mined there from as long ago as the time of the empire of Ghana. Cacao for making chocolate had become its largest cash crop by the 1940s. After World War II ended in 1945 France and

SECOND DAY

Great Britain were no longer able to keep control of their West African colonies and in 1957 the Gold Coast became the first sub-Saharan African country to become independent. Although its location is several hundred miles south of ancient Ghana, the people of the country wanted to associate themselves wih a rich part of African history and therefore chose the name "Ghana" for their independent nation.

The head of independent Ghana was Kwame Nkrumah who was a leader in the nationalist movement for the entire continent, not just in his own country. He built many roads, schools, hospitals, and other buildings as well as expanded the economy. Nkrumah made enemies within the country with the big increase in the national debt and his ambitious foreign policy. This resulted in a military coup in 1966 which overthrew Nkrumah. Stability in the national government is still a goal the Ghanaians are seeking. (See various entries in the bibliography for sources on Ghanaian history.)

Many groups with rich cultural heritages live in Ghana. Outstanding among these are the Ashanti. In the next several weeks we will be studying the stories which these people told and still tell. Some of these stories are in our literature book. They begin on page 388. You may read them as quickly as you like. In fact, you might prepare to tell one of the stories to the class in your own words. This is called oral tradition, and we'll learn more about it tomorrow.

Activities:

1. Read the introduction and several folk tales in the literature book, Projection in Literature "In the Beginning... (a unit of folk literature).

2. Proofread and revise yesterday's story.

3. Using the blank map of Africa (in pencil) write as many names of countries as you know. Please keep these in your notebooks.

LESSON II

Date_____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. To provide students with a thorough understanding of Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

Basic skills

1. To understand the importance of Akon names.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Use handout from African Studies Program, "African Names: The Case of the Akan of Ghana."
2. Using calendars from 1965, 1966, and 1967 Akan names will be given each student.
3. Use filmstrip, "Ashanti of Ghana, A Heritage of Gold."
4. Discuss film strip and encourage students to answer each other's questions as far as possible.
5. Discuss stories read the previous day.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Encourage students to learn the meanings of their own names and the reasons for their having been given those names.
2. Individual reading of literature stories.

SECOND DAY

Implementation:

1. Show slideset "West African Occupations: Musicians and Craftsmen" from African Studies Program

   (a) Discussion:

   How many of those occupations shown in the slides are similar to any here in the United States?

   Name the ones which are different.

   What would be the reason for the similarities and differences?

2. Show slideset "Transportation in Africa." from African Studies Program.

   (a) Discussion:

   What is the major means of transportation ?

   What did you see that was completely unexpected?

   Did you recognize any of the makes of cars? Where are they made? What does this tell you about the imports of these West African countries? What do you think these countries can export to balance the trade?

   Why do we have such distorted ideas about Africa?

   (i) influence of television, e.g. Tarzan movies, etc.
   (ii) books and stories are written by people who know nothing about the continent

THIRD DAY

Implementation:

1. Discuss the three religious beliefs found in Africa:

   (a) traditional beliefs
   (b) Islam
   (c) Christianity

2. Discuss basic tenets of each one.

3. Use slideset "Islam in Africa" from African Studies Program to show slides of mosques and features of the religion itself.

Activities for Students:

1. Try to locate local Moslems in our town and interview them by small groups.

Date _____

Lesson III

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. To read several kinds of literature including animal tales, proverbs, poetry, drama, myths, and epics.
2. To understand why stories may change over a period of time.

Basic skills

1. The student will read, understand and enjoy at least four of the various types of literature available in the classroom library and
2. school library.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. The teacher will tell an Ananse tale to the class recording the story with a cassette tape player.
2. A student will re-tell the story also using the tape recorder. He will verify his version by using the teacher's tape.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

Compare several versions of the same spider tale to see why differences may occur.

Second Day

Implementation:

1. Begin each day with a retelling of the previous day's story.
2. Tell a new folk tale and have a student retell it.
3. The students will read individually any of the material available in the classroom or library.
4. The more capable students will concentrate on the epics.

Third Day

Implementation:

1. Begin with a new tale. A student will retell it using the tape recorder. Repeat yesterday's tale, also.
2. The teacher will read several African poems from the collection of Langston Hughes, Poems from Black Africa.
   (a) What are the subjects of the poems which were read?
   (b) Discuss why people write poetry.
   (c) About what do Americans usually write poetry?
   (d) Are there any similarities in the subjects?
3. Continue individual reading

Fourth Day

Implementation:

1. Retell yesterday's tale.
2. Tell a new tale using the cassette player. A student will re-tell it.
3. Ask students how they have felt when they heard these tales.
4. Ask why their parents have told them various kinds of stories?
5. Help them to recognize that stories can be educational as well as entertaining.
6. Using one of the tales try to dramatize it impromptu.
7. In small groups, read through several plays and prepare one to present at the conclusion of the unit.

Fifth Day

Implementation:

1. View the film "Anansi the Spider" available from the African Studies Program. Discuss the film.

2. Discuss Swahili proverbs using the handout from the ASP, "Politics in Swahili Proverbs."

3. Do you or your parents (grandparents) use proverbs? Why do we use them? How do they make you feel? Better or worse? Why?

4. Write some proverbs which you know.

5. Make up some proverbs which could be useful.

6. Write a brief story and use your proverb as the moral.

Sixth Day

Implementation:

1. The class will be divided into approximately four small groups heterogeneously.

2. Within the group each student will share a story, a poem or whatever literature has appealed to him most.

Activities:

1. Each student will make a good copy of his favorite literary work and add it to his notebook.

LESSON IV

Date _____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. To study African music and dance so that the student will appreciate another culture's values.

Basic skills

1. To play simple musical instruments, mainly percussion.

2. To reproduce basic rhythms.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. See the videotape "Ghanaian Dance" from the African Studies Program. Two dances are shown and demonstration method is used so the students can attempt them.

2. Reproduce basic rhythms by handclapping.
Use cassette tape "African Rhythms: Handclapping Exercises for the Classroom," which is a recording of selections of basic Ghanaian rhythmic patterns with background notes; available from the African Studies Program.

3. Hypothesize the uses of these rhythms

   a. entertainment
   b. accompaniment for dances and storytelling
   c. to encourage maximum work output

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Make simple instruments to use in the practice of rhythms.

2. Try movements to African records to emulate dance rhythms.

SECOND DAY

Implementation:

Since some groups may respond differently to the music, I want to allow an extra day to complete all of the activities.

If time allows use the records "Tribal, Folk and Cafe Music of West Africa." These are available from the Illinois State Museum.

LESSON V

Date_____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. The student will demonstrate an appreciation of West African art.

Basic skills

1. Some of the students will be able to identify and explain Ashanti gold work.

2. All of the students will tie-dye a small article or make an adinkra design.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Show the students tie-dyed fabric and adinkra printed cloth.

2. Explain that tie-dyeing is an ancient craft practiced in West Africa.

3. Show slideset "Sierra Leone Dress," available from the African Studies Program.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Tie small squares of paper towels or cloth for technique of tieing.

2. Materials to be used: clothes lines and clothes pins; buckets, tubs and basin for dyeing or rinsing; scissors; twine or rubber bands; various objects such as stones, buttons, bottle caps for tying knots; cloth; stapler; dye, 3 packets to four gallons of water.

SECOND DAY

Implementation:

1. The students will tie squares of cloth and dye them in a variety of patterns.
2. If any other items such as a T-shirt have been brought to class, the owners may tie and dye them.
3. These will be dried and used to decorate the room.

THIRD DAY

Implementation:

Use African Studies Program handout "Adinkra Cloth."

1. Have children draw a design on a piece of paper.
2. Give each a half a potato and knife to cut design as demonstrated by teacher.
3. Mix tempra for children to take turns dipping.
4. Stamp cloth.
5. Show and tell designs and colors.

Materials to be used

Plain white cloth or a sheet of white paper, potatoes, magazines, knives, papers, tempera.

LESSON VI

Date_____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. The students will recognize similarities in the games which African children play by comparing those games to their own.

Basic skills

1. The students will learn to play Oware.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

African Studies Program handouts to be used:

Ethiopian Games

I Have a Dog (Sierra Leone Game)

Oware in an Ashanti Village (an African board game)

1. Several games from Ethiopia will be explained
2. "I Have a Dog" from Sierra Leone will be demonstrated.
3. African checkers with a board will be utilized.
4. Oware will be explained.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Each student will make an Oware board and learn to play the game.

LESSON VII

Date _____

Grade _____

A. OBJECTIVES

Concept to be taught in this day's lesson

1. The student will be able to explain why climate affects the crops raised in any country.

2. The student will become aware of the food crops which are grown in Ghana.

3. Using several foods native to Ghana we'll prepare a simple meal.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Use the overhead projector to show the various climate zones of the continent.

2. Discuss how climate controls the types of crops which are raised both for subsistence and cash.

   a. Why do we eat the foods we do?

      (1) they are accessible
      (2) our background determines which foods our families eat

C. ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

1. Make a list of foods which your family eats that others may not. Try to determine why this is true.

SECOND DAY

Implementation:

1. Show slideset "African Food Crops," available from the African Studies Program.

2. Using the reference books in the library make a list of the principal food crops which are grown or raised in Ghana.

   a. ground nuts (peanuts)
   b. bananas
   c. rice
   d. cassava or manioc
   e. chicken
   f. tomatoes and onions
   g. kola nuts
   h. palm oil

3. Discuss some West African recipes contained in the African Studies Program handout "African Recipes."

CONCLUSION

As a result of these studies, a simple meal will be prepared and served to the administrators. At that time there will be a presentation of the play which some have prepared, oral stories, some singing, dancing and games. This will be videotaped.

The reaction of the class will be an indication of their enjoyment of this unit.

Second Day

Give the post-test of completion of sentences about Africa. Distribute the pre-test and compare the answers to see if attitudes and information about the continent have changed.

All materials should be included in the folders which will be retained for an open house. Afterward the students will take them home to share with their parents.

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Audiovisual Materials Used in This Unit

All of the audiovisual materials from this unit are available free of charge from the following address:

African Studies Program
University of Illinois
1208 West California
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Film Strip

1. The Ashanti of Ghana: A Heritage of Gold

Videotape

1. Ghanaian Dance

Film

1. Anansi the Spider, 11 minutes, color

Cassette Tape

1. African Rhythms: Handclapping Exercises for the Classroom

Slide Sets

1. African Food Crops - 35 slides. Cultivating and processing food plants.
2. Islam and Africa - 39 slides. History, meaning, and contributions of Islam to world civilization and Africa in particular.
3. Transportation in Africa - 42 slides. Different means of transportation, the role of transport systems, and problems of transportation in Africa.
4. Urbana Africa - 50 slides. Views from selected cities and scenes depicting issues associated with urbanization.
5. West African Occupations: Musicians and Craftsmen - 33 slides. Shows the work of calabash carvers, leather workers, professional musicians, and palm oil processors.

Handouts

1. Adinkra Cloth
2. African Names: The Case of the Akan of Ghana
3. African Recipes (from Nigeria and Sierra Leone)
4. Ethiopian Games
5. I Have a Dog (Sierra Leone Game)
6. Oware in an Ashanti Village (an African Board Game)
7. Politics in Swahili Proverbs

MY AFRICA

I love the days of long ago,
Great days of virtuous chastity
When wild men and wilder beasts
Kept close company.

I love Africa as herself--
Unsophisticated queenly Africa,
That precious pearl of the past.
Not all her beauties were the best
Nor all her charms the highest
In the days of long ago.

But give me back that Africa,
With all her best and all her worst,
Then leave me free to plan anew
Great God's own Africa,
Charged with the charms of long ago.
Yet give me, too, from far away lands
The fertile laws of Faraday.

Give me these,
And out of that long-lost Africa

Will rise, phoenix-like,
A New-World Africa.

When vision was short
And knowledge scant,
Men called me Dark Africa

Dark Africa?
I, who raised the regal pyramids
And held the fortunes of Conquering Caesars
In my tempting grasp.

Dark Africa?
Who nursed the doubtful child
Of civilization
On the Wand'ring banks
Of the life-giving Nile,
And gave to the teeming nations
Of the West a Grecian gift.

The dazzling glare of iron and steel
Sometimes obscures non-metal's worth,
So when I held close
My pristine bows and arrows,
And cared not much for iron and steel
Men called me Dark.
But dearer far than steel and iron
Is the tranquil art
Of thinking together
And living together.

I know a world,
A trampled world,
Partitioned and pawned
In centuries of greed
And still undone—
My Africa.

A waking world,
Rising now
From age-long slumber,
Fresh with the strength
That follows rest—
My Africa.

I love a world,
This priceless world,
Sweet home of haunting melodies
And roll of tom-toms--
My Africa.

I'll die for a world,
A wonderful world,
No other land
Nor East nor West
Attracts me so--
My Africa.

Michael Dei-Anang / Ghana